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Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 04333 240558Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 4333

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, KS, KN, US
SUBJ: TRIPARTITE TALKS

1. VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YOON TOLD DCM MAY 23 THAT ROK'S OFFICIAL POSITION ON TRIPARTITE TALKS PROPOSAL WAS IN FACT PROVIDED BY FOREIGN MINISTER TO EDITORS OF HANGUK ILBO (SEOUL 4294). IN THAT MEETING FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT ROK WOULD WISH TO TALK DIRECTLY WITH THE YUGOSLAVS IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRIPARTITE CONCEPT.

2. ROK BASES ITS POSITION ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. SINCE TITO IS A PROPONENT OF THIS CONCEPT AND SINCE HE HAS DIRECT CONTACT WITH NORTH KOREA AND THE UNITED STATES, IT WOULD SEEM REASONABLE THAT HE WOULD HAVE SIMILAR CONTACTS WITH THE THIRD PARTY INVOLVED.

B. THAT, SINCE THE CONCEPT SEEMS TO BE SO VAGUE, IT WOULD APPEAR DESIRABLE FOR ROK TO OBTAIN MORE DETAILED INFORMATION DIRECTLY FROM THE PROPONENT.
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3. ROK HOPES THAT US WILL CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT. THE CONTACTS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE ROK WOULD NOT REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, BUT COULD BE CONDUCTED THROUGH SPECIAL EMISSARIES DESIGNATED TO DISCUSS THE TRIPARTITE ISSUE EXCLUSIVELY.

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4. THE ROK IS THEREBY WITH ITS RESPONSE NOT REJECTING THE PROPOSAL (COMMENT: BUT IS OBVIOUSLY PROPOSING TO PUT THE BALL BACK IN TITO'S COURT).

5. THE VICE MINISTER ALSO INDICATED THAT IF THE YUGO-SLAV'S WERE WILLING TO HAVE SUCH DIRECT CONTACT, THIS WOULD BE OPPORTUNITY FOR ROK TO PRESENT ITS CASE. THE ROK FEELS THAT AT THE MOMENT TITO'S VIEW OF THE PENINSULA IS SKEWED BY WHAT HE HAS BEEN TOLD BY NORTH KOREA AND ROK WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: ROK HAS OBVIOUSLY DECIDED IT COULD NOT BE SEEN BY THE WORLD AS THE NEGATIVE PARTY. IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY ASSUMING, HOWEVER, THAT NORTH KOREA WILL REJECT THE PROPOSAL ON THE GROUNDS THAT PYONGYANG MAY FEEL IT WILL BE OUT VOTED TWO TO ONE IN A TRIPARTITE ENVIRONMENT. IT IS ALSO VERY LIKELY THAT ROK FEELS THAT TITO WILL REJECT ANY PROPOSAL FOR DIRECT CONVER-SATIONS, THEREBY ALSO GETTING ROK OFF THE HOOK. MOFA SEEMS TO BE IN NO HURRY TO COME TO GRIPS WITH A SPECIFIC ISSUE OR EVEN THE GENERAL PROBLEM OF RESOLVING THE PENINSULA QUESTION. THEREFORE, IT DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY THAT IT WILL BE VERY FORTHCOMING ON OUR PROPOSITION TO ENTER INTO INFORMAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN
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MOFA AND THE EMBASSY, AT LEAST IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOWEVER THAT MOFA'S VIEWS ARE NECESSARILY SHARED BY OTHER PARTS OF THE GOVERNMENT.
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